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ABSTRACT

This "Civic Index" is intended to help communities evaluate and improve their civic infrastructures, as well as look at the issues and find approaches to dealing with them. The 10 components of the Civic Index serve as a description of the types of skills and processes that must be present for a community to deal effectively with its unique concerns. The Civic Index is meant to assist communities in developing their problem-solving capacity by providing a method and a process for first identifying and recognizing their strengths and weaknesses and then structuring collaborative approaches to solving shared problems. The 10 components of the index are the following: (1) civic participation; (2) community leadership; (3) government performance; (4) volunteerism and philanthropy; (5) intergroup relations; (6) civic education; (7) community information sharing; (8) capacity for cooperation and consensus building; (9) community vision and pride; and (10) intercommunity cooperation. Each component includes a checklist with which communities can evaluate their situation. The publication also contains 96 references (some annotated), a list of the programs of the National Civic League, and a list of the officers and directors of the organization. (KC)

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THE CIVIC INDEX

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A NEW APPROACH TO IMPROVING COMMUNITY LIFE

- Citizen Participation
- Community Leadership
- Government Performance
- Volunteerism and Philanthropy
- Intergroup Relations
- Civic Education
- Community Information Sharing
- Capacity for Cooperation and Consensus Building
- Community Vision and Pride
- Inter-Community Cooperation

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For information on how the concepts and techniques presented in this booklet can be applied in your community, contact the National Civic League at (303) 571-4343.

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A New Approach to Improving Community Life

Our approaches to solving societal problems in the United States have been evolving for over a decade. Successful communities no longer look primarily to Washington for money or program guidance. Rather, leaders in America's most vibrant and vital communities are blurring the boundaries between government, business and the nonprofit sector. These successful communities recognize the interdependence among sectors and citizens, and struggle to identify common goals to meet individual and community needs and aspirations.

Shifting our approach to community problem solving is a difficult but necessary task. Successful communities are throwing off old traditions, realizing that no group will succeed unless the diverse needs of the entire community are met. Bank presidents, community activists, developers, and religious leaders are using informal gatherings and processes to sort out differences and develop principles they can agree to. Astute elected and appointed officials do not view these activities as threats, but embrace them warmly. They understand, for instance, that moderate-income housing does not get built when a city council or county commission passes an ordinance, but when a coalition of community development corporations (CDCs), financial institutions, churches, *and* government agencies collaboratively design and accept responsibility for the effort.

Communities that are operating in this way have developed new techniques for improving the lives and prospects of all their residents. Six years ago, the National Civic League (NCL) set out to identify the capacities and competencies that existed in these communities. The key to success is building — or rebuilding, when necessary — the community's *civic infrastructure*. In a wide variety of settings — small towns like Sedona, Arizona; the border town of McAllen, Texas; suburban towns like Westminster, Colorado; the old manufacturing center of Lorain, Ohio; the metropolitan areas of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina and Portland, Oregon; and the entire State of New Hampshire — citizens from all sectors and corners of the community have come together to build their community problem-solving capacity.

All these communities have looked at the challenges confronting them, considered where they would like to be in the future, agreed on what everyone in the community must do to achieve that vision, and, finally, developed an action plan to achieve that vision. The National Civic League has assisted them in carrying out those activities.

The New Realities

The National Civic League helps citizens understand that the challenges they face are not unique to their community. This is not meant to diminish the seriousness of the issues they are dealing with, but to let them know they can look to other communities for successful *approaches* to

resolving issues. All communities are facing this new set of realities:

- There will continue to be fewer public dollars available for dealing with critical societal issues.
- Challenges and problems, and the solutions to them, will continue to increasingly be the responsibilities of local and regional communities.
- Increased local decision-making responsibility places greater importance on integrity and effectiveness in local government.
- Collaboration and interdependence will be watchwords for local and regional action.
- Power has been widely and thinly distributed.
- Increasing diversity — racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, age, physical or mental ability — and the potential for polarization, are realities for every community.
- Every community must focus on developing new strategies and tools to get people to agree on a plan and then work together to achieve it.

Civic Infrastructure

To respond to the New Realities, NCL has developed a theoretical framework for communities to use in dealing with these challenges. Every community has a *civic infrastructure* — the complex interaction of people and groups through which decisions are made and problems resolved. The quality of this interaction determines a community's health, both economic and social. It is the social and political processes reflected in how people engage in public

Civic Index Components

✓ **Citizen Participation**
Making it a "contact sport."

✓ **Community Leadership**
It has to come from everywhere.

✓ **Government Performance**
Professional, entrepreneurial and open.

✓ **Volunteerism and Philanthropy**
Increasing the leverage of your local "points of light."

✓ **Intergroup Relations**
Strength through diversity.

✓ **Civic Education**
The community as a classroom.

✓ **Community Information Sharing**
It takes more than watching the evening news.

✓ **Capacity for Cooperation and Consensus Building**
Turning potential conflict into positive action.

✓ **Community Vision and Pride**
You can't build the future without a common vision.

✓ **Inter-Community Cooperation**
Whom are we really competing with?

discourse and decision making. It is how people work together and relate to each other. It is how people help each other and the community as a whole set priorities and deal with problems. Just as with a community's physical infrastructure, if the civic infrastructure has deteriorated it must be rebuilt. In newer communities it has to be built before they will be able to deal successfully with their challenges. In successful communities, the civic infrastructure is often composed of many informal and *ad hoc* relationships.

The Civic Index

The National Civic League developed the Civic Index to help communities evaluate and improve their civic infrastructures. The ten components of the Index serve as a description of the types of skills and processes that must be present for a community to deal effectively with its unique concerns. Whether the specific issue is a quality school system, an air pollution problem, or lack of adequate low-income housing, the need for effective problem-solving and leadership skills is the same. A community must have strong leaders, from all sectors, who are able to work together with informed, involved citizens to reach consensus on those strategic issues that face the community and the region around it. Communities must have the capacity to solve the problems they face.

For communities to respond to their challenges, they must resolve, for themselves, that their capacity to solve problems requires revitalization. Outside consultants can make recommendations, but there will be little likelihood of action being taken without local ownership of a strategy and implementation plan. The Civic Index assists communities in developing their problem-solving capacity by providing a method and a process for first identifying and recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, and then structuring collaborative approaches to solving shared problems. The Index provides a framework within which communities can undertake a self-evaluation of their civic infrastructure. The result of such projects is not an end. Rather, the outcome is a clear picture of the actions a community must take—the types of skills and processes it must develop —to build its own capacity to deal with critical issues. ■

The Civic Index Components

Citizen Participation

Making it a "contact sport."

Citizen participation in political, community and neighborhood affairs is critical to the creation and maintenance of a strong, vibrant community. A community without regular interaction among citizens is less a community than a random collection of people. Without active participation it is difficult for a community to agree on what problems to address and how to move forward collectively to solve them.

Citizen participation includes voting in local elections, serving on government boards and commissions, attending public hearings, and being active in neighborhood and civic organizations. Citizen participation includes asking questions and involving oneself in working toward solutions.

Stuart Langton notes that citizen participation is at once the most and least controversial issue of democratic theory today. It is uncontroversial in that "everyone" agrees that citizen participation is requisite to the achievement of social, economic and political equality in our communities and our nation. The controversy arises over concerns about when, where and how citizens should participate. A community may in fact enjoy an abundance of citizen participation, but must problems degenerate into crises before citizens mobilize? Langton offers the idea of a "learning and involved community," which provides for civic stability without inflicting injustice, strong advocacy without polarization, and consensus without exclusion as a model for citizen participation that seeks to improve the quality of civic life. (Stuart Langton, "Strengthening Citizen Participation," National Civic Review, Vol. 76, No. 3, May-June 1987, pp. 225-226).

Citizen Participation Checklist

1. Do citizens volunteer to serve on local boards?
2. How visible and active are local civic groups?
3. Do citizens know how local government works?
4. Is participation proactive or reactive?
5. Are citizens actively involved in major projects?

Community Leadership

It has to come from everywhere.

The public, private and nonprofit sectors must jointly develop leaders who can cooperate with each other in ensuring the long-term success of their communities. Leadership must be representative and results-oriented, willing to take risks, and willing to be self-critical. Leadership must be able to evoke response and generate support among other leaders, as well as motivate potential followers.

In any discussion of community leadership, the question arises, "What is good leadership?" In the literature there is little agreement about the exact traits, skills and behaviors that constitute good leadership. Some, like Burt Nanus, suggest that we are a society that is "overmanaged and underled" by its public leaders, who sacrifice "foresight and innovation in addressing the future" for administrative detail (in Leonard Sayles, *Leadership: What Effective Managers Really Do...And How They Do It*, McGraw-Hill, 1979).

There is abundant agreement, however, that the nature of leadership is constantly changing, and necessarily so. "Leadership . . . increasingly resides in the many rather than the few; in joint rather than individual endeavors; and in the empowerment rather than control of others. ...Improvement [in leadership] will occur as positions are attained by more persons who have a strong sense of self, a large philosophical value system and the ability to empower others to learn and contribute individually and together as co-leaders" (Paul Lorentzen, "Leadership: Changing Contexts, Flexible Concepts," *The Bureaucrat*, Fall 1986, p. 3).

The demographic changes in communities must be reflected in their leadership. To do this, the leaders of today must recruit, develop and empower the leaders of tomorrow. For, "The truth is that major capacities and competencies of leadership can be learned. ...[N]urture is far more important than nature in determining who becomes a successful leader" (Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, New York, Harper and Row, 1985).

Community Leadership Checklist

1. Is there active leadership from all three sectors?
2. Is government willing to share leadership turf?
3. Are there training programs to nurture new leaders?
4. Is leadership results-oriented?
5. Is leadership risk-taking?
6. Do leaders take the long-term view?
7. Do leaders from the three sectors work well together?

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Professional, entrepreneurial and open.

Government performance expresses the answers to two questions: 1) How responsive is a government to the needs and desires of the community it serves?, and 2) How valuable to the community are a government's services? The first question encompasses government effectiveness and the second, government efficiency. Issues of community values and priorities are inherent in both questions. Good value not only means providing the right quantity of a high-quality service at a reasonable cost; it also means allocating resources and delivering services equitably with respect to the needs, desires, and value systems of all segments of the community. (Paul Epstein and Suzanne Fass, "Government Performance," NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW, March-April 1987, p. 137)

Whatever a government's formally delineated responsibilities and whatever its size, it must continually evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency by asking the above questions. New tools such as performance measurement, public-private partnerships and privatization, and performance budgeting and auditing, must be proven to be effective and efficient for any given application. For instance, a performance-measurement system effective for a municipality of 60,000 residents might be highly inefficient and ineffective for a town of 600 residents.

The role of innovation in government performance cannot be understated, for it is a government's ability to encourage and integrate innovation that will allow it to take advantage of emerging technologies, strategies, and opportunities. Equally important is a government's ability to provide incentives for performance. The artful blend of these components can assist government in its capacity to solve problems and arrive at creative solutions.

While government cannot solve all community problems by itself, it must be a positive force in addressing community needs and providing services effectively and efficiently. When government works well, it is responsive, professional, accountable, equitable, entrepreneurial, effective, efficient, and free of corruption.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

1. Is government free of corruption?
2. Does government address qualitative concerns about services?
3. Is government professional and entrepreneurial?
4. Is government responsive and accountable?
5. Are services provided equitably?
6. Does government consider and utilize alternative methods of service delivery?
7. Is government a positive force in addressing community needs?

Volunteerism and Philanthropy

Increasing the leverage of your local "points of light."

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly" (Martin Luther King, Letter from Birmingham City Jail, 1962).

Caring about, and sharing resources to help one another and the community as a whole is essential to community life. Increased social needs combined with limits in government resources call for a greater contribution of time, money and services from individuals and community institutions.

If communities are to meet the dual challenges of increasing needs and dwindling resources, they will need comprehensive strategies to enhance and maximize their philanthropic and volunteer capacities. An important prerequisite to the development of strategies is improved lines of communication among all types of institutions: private, public and nonprofit. The leadership of the three sectors must work together in this effort.

A community's long-range and short-term volunteerism and philanthropy strategies will include many factors: target goals for per-capita volunteer hours and average dollar contributions per-capita; number of service projects completed; level of private sector support; and meaningful forums in which to express appreciation for volunteers. These are all necessary and vital and will be achievable only if a final ingredient is added to the community's culture: the inculcation of an ethic of giving and sharing as a way of life.

Umbrella organizations, like Metro Detroit GIVES, which promote the ethic of giving itself, can do this. Another route is the incorporation of a curriculum of community service into primary, secondary and higher educational programs. People can and must be empowered with the knowledge that what they do matters, and that they can make a difference.

Volunteerism and Philanthropy Checklist

1. Is there an active community foundation?
2. Do local corporations have active giving programs?
3. Does the community have long-term philanthropic goals?
4. Do local programs encourage and honor volunteers and philanthropists?
5. Do government and business work closely with the nonprofit sector?

INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Strength through diversity.

As communities continue to diversify ethnically, racially, socio-economically, and religiously, programs are needed to increase communication and appreciation among groups and within the community as a whole. Communities must ensure that all groups have the skills and opportunities to become actively involved in community affairs.

All communities are host to organized ethnic, racial or religious "solidarity" groups (as distinct from professional and business associations, *ad hoc* policy-oriented interest groups, or political parties) that may emerge to express and defend their members' basic social interests. The degree to which different "solidarity" groups co-exist in relative harmony and cooperate in resolving shared problems is an essential measure of civic health, particularly as local populations become more diverse.

The value of community groups as a vehicle for peer modeling, self-esteem enhancement and cultural pride cannot be overstated. Equally valuable is the group's capacity for peaceful conflict expression, mediation and resolution. Without conflict management skills, intergroup tensions rule. With conflict management skills, group members are able to assertively express conflict, take responsibility for that conflict, and manage it.

Other tools that are vital for intergroup harmony are 1) communication skills, 2) respect for group cultural history, 3) business skills, 4) civic involvement skills, and 5) leadership skills. Ideally, group members can learn these skills within their groups of specific affiliation, and then transfer that learning to arenas of broader interaction.

Ultimately and most importantly, healthy intergroup relations are the result of openness to and respect for diversity. When this is the case, the fullest positive growth capacity of community groups may be realized.

INTERGROUP RELATIONS CHECKLIST

1. Is the community dealing with ethnic and racial diversity?
2. Does the community promote communication among diverse populations?
3. Do all groups have the skills to become involved in the community?
4. Do groups cooperate in resolving broad disputes?
5. Do small, specific conflicts escalate into larger issues?
6. Is the community dominated by narrow special-interest groups?

Civic Education

The community as a classroom.

Too often civic education is narrowly defined as a course offered to secondary school students teaching the mechanisms of representative government. Civic education can be, and must be, much more than a senior year elective course.

"Civic education in its simplest form is the way in which we learn the lessons or modes of behavior that enable us to be a part of the culture we live in. It is, in this regard, education for both the head and the heart. ...While the study of our public tasks is a necessary part of the civic arts, it is not wholly sufficient as civic education. These lessons must also ... dwell in our hearts and at times be something we feel strongly but cannot explain completely. They must include an attachment to justice, a willingness to serve beyond self-interest, an openness to all those who share the rank of citizen, and a perspective that reaches beyond the generation living to those unborn." (Edward O'Neil, "Civic Education: The Problems and Potentials," National Civic Review, 76:4, July-August 1987, pp. 302-307.)

The private, public and nonprofit sectors in communities—along with schools and churches — each must take responsibility for contributing to the civic educational culture. How might an individual business make a positive contribution to community civic education? One way is to ensure that information about local, state and national government and politics is accessible to employees, perhaps posted on a bulletin board or available in a lounge area. Businesses can also sponsor public affairs forums for the discussion of current events and issues, or permit leaves of absence allowing employees to contribute time to community service. The creative opportunities and possibilities follow the intent and commitment.

As each sector takes responsibility for the task of civic education and acts on that responsibility, the fabric of the community's civic life will evolve. Comprehensive civic education can promote increased citizen participation and stronger community leadership. Citizens who are educated about their community, their government, and their history will come to believe that their actions matter and that they can make a difference.

Civic Education Checklist

1. Do schools promote or require community involvement?
2. Do schools, churches, and youth agencies offer civic education?
3. Do civic education efforts involve the entire community?
4. Do youth have ample opportunity to engage in community service?
5. Are schools teaching citizenship and civic responsibility?

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHARING

It takes more than watching the evening news.

Whether it is the media, a civic organization, a university, or a school system, communities must have mechanisms for gathering and sharing information, and educating the public on major issues. Community information sharing is the composite of all these mechanisms. Without comprehensive and accessible information sharing a community's ability to work toward cooperation and consensus, make balanced judgments and head off contentious disputes is impaired.

Futurists say our society has left the industrial age and entered the information age. John Naisbitt names the industrial-to-information age transformation as one of the major trends shaping the present and the future in *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*. Information users and receivers will have increasing power over what information they choose to receive. "In the future, editors won't tell us what to read: We will tell editors what we choose to read" (John Naisbitt, *Megatrends* (New York: Warner Books, 1982, p. 26).

The link between information access and selection and citizen participation is irrefutable. Citizens must understand the vital issues of their communities so that they can make informed decisions. Just as it is the responsibility of local media and government to make the information readily available to citizens, citizens have a similar responsibility to search out a true cross-section of opinions and viewpoints. The responsibility is reciprocal.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHARING CHECKLIST

1. Do citizens have information they need to make good decisions?
2. What role does government play in making information available?
3. Do schools and libraries play a role in informing the public?
4. Are there civic organizations designed for this purpose?
5. Do the media cover community issues fairly?
6. Do the media play an active and supportive role in the community?

Capacity for Cooperation and Consensus Building

Turning potential conflict into positive action.

The growing number and complexity of problems faced by localities demand that government, business and the nonprofit sector work closely together in setting common goals and working together to achieve them. As disagreements arise in the community, neutral forums and processes are needed where all opinions can be heard and consensus cultivated. Some theorists and observers are beginning to assert that conflict — and the ability to manage it — is a key defining feature of community (See, for example, Carl M. Moore, "Community Is Where Community Happens," National Civic Review, 80:4, Fall 1991, pp. 352-357; and Frances Moore Lappé et al., "NCR Forum," National Civic Review, 80:2, Spring 1991, pp. 105-112.)

"As anyone who has attempted it knows, convincing diverse interests to work together for the common good can be a thorny task. Hyper-specialization and our profoundly individualistic culture give priority to protecting one's own turf—however small it may be—while tending to neglect 'joint venture' problem solving. Yet, for certain critical purposes, better collaboration is the only practical answer" (Editor's Comment, National Civic Review, 77:4, July-August 1988, pp. 281-284).

In recent years a number of processes have emerged to help communities achieve greater capacity for cooperation and consensus, particularly modern moderation and negotiation techniques. All such tools must have the flexibility to adapt to a given community's needs. "New approaches to dispute resolution get people together to face their conflicts, help them devise workable problem definitions and discover ways to resolve their differences. Employing them can facilitate problem solving, and at the same time strengthen communities" (Christine M. Carlson, "Creating the Climate for Conflict Resolution in Communities," National Civic Review, 77:4, July-August 1988, pp. 387-398).

Ideally, representatives and leaders from all sectors of the community must work together to identify serious local needs, agree upon goals and action plans, and contribute to successful implementation.

Capacity For Cooperation And Consensus Building Checklist

1. Are there neutral forums and processes where all opinions are heard?
2. Are there informal dispute resolution processes?
3. Do community leaders have regular opportunities to share ideas?
4. Are all major interests represented in collaborative processes?
5. Do all three sectors work together to set common goals?
6. Do leaders reach collective decisions and implement them?

COMMUNITY VISION AND PRIDE

You can't build the future without a common vision.

Communities that deal successfully with the challenges they face have developed a clear picture of where they want to go and also have a clear sense of their past. To establish vision for the future and pride in past accomplishments requires broadly participatory strategic planning activities. These activities can take many forms. "Goals for" or "Year 2000" projects are examples of processes that have been undertaken across the country.

"A growing number of places are using the term 'vision' to describe the first step of the long-range planning process. Starting with a vision implies seeking agreement about the desired outcome of the plan, visualizing and articulating the kind of community residents want in the future, which might be defined as five or ten or even twenty years hence" (International City Management Association, *Taking Charge: How Communities Are Planning Their Futures*, ICMA Office of Data and Information Services, Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 7).

When citizens are brought into the community vision-creation process they become invested; the community vision that emerges is theirs and they become stakeholders in their community's future. "Vision plans are helping to make planning for the future a civic activity. The technical work necessary to manage and implement the public policy recommendations of the plan may be delegated to professionals, but citizens develop the objectives and strategy" (ICMA, *Taking Charge*, p. 32).

Sharing in problem solving and planning for the future as a community is an empowering experience that raises the community's collective self-esteem. With good self-esteem comes healthy pride in oneself. Accordingly, as citizens become stakeholders by investing in their community's vision, greater community pride is a natural consequence.

COMMUNITY VISION AND PRIDE CHECKLIST

1. Is there a shared sense of a desired future for the community?
2. Has the community completed a broad strategic plan?
3. Does the community have a positive self-image?
4. Does the community preserve and enhance what is special and unique?
5. Does the community proactively monitor critical issues?
6. Does the community deal with problems before they become crises?

INTER-COMMUNITY COOPERATION

Whom are we really competing with?

Cutbacks in federal funds and destructive economic competition among regions are two factors driving neighboring cities, towns and counties to look for new avenues of cooperation. Local communities are no longer competing with each other as much as they are competing with other regions in the national and international marketplace. Individual communities need to cooperate with each other in planning for their shared future and addressing regional needs.

An additional factor that has spurred inter-community cooperation is the emergence of issues that are more regional than local in nature: land use, hunger, affordable housing, economic development, and environmental protection. Such problems clearly cross jurisdictional boundaries, and so must the solutions. For example, to what avail does a town clean up its river basin if the towns upstream continue to allow industrial wastes to be dumped into that river?

The approaches a community can take toward fostering inter-community or regional cooperation range from informal agreements to formal political restructuring. "Informal cooperation is the easiest and probably the most widely practiced approach to regionalism. It generally involves collaborative and reciprocal activities, but not fiscal transactions. The hardest approaches to metro regionalism are complex consolidations and restructurings, which create new, area-wide levels of government, reallocate local government powers and functions, and disrupt the political and institutional status quo" (David B. Walker, "Snow White and the 17 Dwarfs: From Metro Cooperation to Governance," NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW, 76:1, January-February 1987, pp. 14-28).

Communities need a flexible, open approach to determine how inter-community cooperation can assist in solving local as well as regional problems. The level of cooperation among community leaders, and their ability to translate that cooperation into each community's vision, will be the key.

INTER-COMMUNITY COOPERATION CHECKLIST

1. How do local governments relate to each other?
2. How do region-wide policy challenges get resolved?
3. Is economic development addressed on a region-wide basis?
4. Do leaders in the region have a common forum to discuss issues?
5. Are any services provided on a regional basis?
6. Are any planning activities carried out on a regional basis?

■

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Programs and Services of the National Civic League

The **National Civic League** (NCL) advocates a new civic agenda to create communities that work for everyone. Founded in 1894 by Theodore Roosevelt, Louis Brandeis and other turn-of-the-century progressives, NCL vigorously promotes the principles of collaborative problem-solving and consensus-based decision-making. NCL accomplishes its mission through technical assistance, training, publishing, research, and an awards program. NCL's programs and services are summarized below.

- **All-America City & Community Award.** Founded in 1949, the All-America City & Community (AAC) Award competition annually honors ten communities of all sizes for extraordinary civic accomplishments made possible by the cooperative efforts of individuals and the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The AAC Award is sponsored by The Allstate Foundation. An annual All-America City & Community Yearbook spotlighting the projects of the winning communities is available from NCL.

- **Alliance for National Renewal.** NCL serves as the catalyst and convener of a new, nationwide initiative to meet the difficult challenges facing America's communities. The Alliance for National Renewal (ANR) seeks to build confidence and a sense of possibility by underscoring the signs of successful community problem-solving. Together with more than 140 organizations, NCL spotlights innovations at the local level, promotes connection between organizations and individuals, and spreads the spirit of renewal through education, communication, research and projects. *The Kitchen Table*, a quarterly newsletter chronicles community renewal activities.

- **Program for Community Problem Solving.** A division of NCL, the Program for Community Problem Solving (PCPS), was established to help communities develop a civic culture that nurtures and supports community problem-solving. PCPS offers training, presentations, facilitation, research and technical assistance, as well as a range of publications. PCPS is located at 915 15th Street NW, #601, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 783-2961, Fax: (202) 347-2161.

- **Civic Assistance Program.** Through the Civic Assistance Program (CAP), NCL works directly with leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors to conduct community-based visioning and strategic planning projects. NCL uses its Civic Index, a ten-component tool for assessing and enhancing the problem-solving capacity of a community, as part of the process. As a result of this process, NCL positions communities for success by identifying innovative

community projects that build broad-based constituencies for action on key issues. CAP has worked with communities around the nation including: Cedar Rapids; the Central Oklahoma Region; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Fort Morgan, Colorado; Hartford, Connecticut; Indianapolis, Indiana; New Orleans, Louisiana; Denver, Colorado; Phoenix, Arizona; Portland, Oregon; Atlanta, Georgia; McAllen, Texas; Fort Myers, Florida; Mobile, Alabama; the State of New Hampshire; the Rouge River Valley Region of Southern Oregon; Sedona, Arizona; and Tempe, Arizona. These results are used as a starting point by the community to develop action plans and plan for implementation.

CAP also contains programs which target specific areas of today's communities. These include:

Diversity and Governance: An initiative to assist communities in the increasing challenge of valuing and including all members and perspectives in planning for the future. Focus group reports from the California cities of Los Angeles, Fresno and Oakland were exciting examples of this program.

Radon Action Program: With funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, NCL is conducting radon awareness and response workshops in communities across the nation. This is a collaborative partnership between NCL and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop and enhance public-private partnerships addressing this national health risk.

Youth Action Project: A program which adapts NCL's collaborative and consensus-based decision-making process to youth issues, with youth as stakeholders.

- **Healthy Communities Program.** The three Healthy Community programs are:

  Healthy Communities Initiative: The Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI), developed in cooperation with the U.S. Public Health Service, promotes a collaborative community-based approach to addressing health and quality-of-life issues. A set of HCI publications is available from NCL. They are: ***Healthy Communities Directory, Healthy Communities Resource Guide,*** and ***The Healthy Communities Handbook.***

Healthy Communities Program, continued

Healthy Communities Action Project: The Healthy Communities Action Project (HCAP) is an annual training program which develops local leadership for healthy communities efforts. Participants gain collaborative decision-making skills, strategies for overcoming turf barriers, the newest assessment and benchmarking tools, and a strong national network.

Colorado Healthy Communities Initiative: The Colorado Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI) is a partnership between NCL and The Colorado Trust. NCL has provided training and technical assistance to 28 community initiatives, making it the largest statewide healthy communities initiative in the nation. Community groups are working throughout the state to improve health status, housing, community safety and other quality-of-life issues.

- **National Civic League PRESS.** Since 1912, the NCL **PRESS** has been publishing the *National Civic Review (NCR)*, a quarterly community affairs journal. The *Review* focuses on innovative methods for confronting local and regional challenges, and highlights topics of current interest. In addition to the *Review*, the NCL **PRESS** offers a variety of unique books and monographs to citizens, civic leaders and government officials. Members receive a free subscription to the *Review* and discounts on all NCL publications.

- **Research.** NCL's research addresses applied problems of regional and local government. It focuses on evaluation of the best current and most promising emerging practices. Current NCL research is investigating emerging forms of regional governance, and best practices in building collaborations among nonprofit organizations. NCL also performs community-level needs assessments which are often used in conjunction with community visioning and strategic planning.

- **National Conference on Governance.** NCL conducts an annual conference and membership meeting showcasing community-building efforts. The 102nd National Conference on Governance (NCG) will take place in November, 1996.

- **Membership.** Members represent diverse interests, including state and local elected office holders, government administrators, national and regional associations, academicians, and the media.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

All Members receive: NATIONAL CIVIC REVIEW, *The Kitchen Table* and *Civic Action*, discounts on NCL publications, and discounted registration fee to the National Conference on Governance.

Local Government members also receive: NCL publications for each member of the governing board

Corporate members also receive: invitations to special events, copies of all NCL publications published throughout the year and special acknowledgements in NCL publications.

- To enjoy these benefits, including access to a broad network of community, business, and government leaders committed to the ideals of effective local and state governance, join us today.

- If you need help in your community... If you want information about what others are doing in their communities...

- If you want to connect with other problem solvers... Call the National Civic League or discuss technical assistance opportunities with NCL staff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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- Write us at: 1445 Market Street, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80202-1728

- E-mail us at: ncl@csn.org

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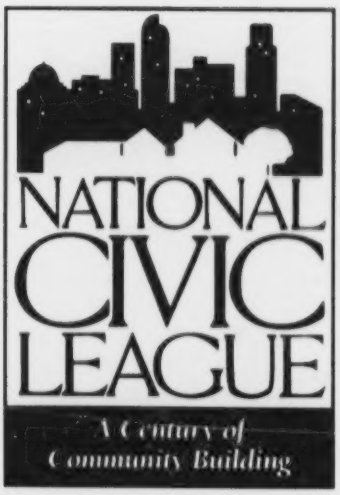

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